

What is claimed is:

1. An oral composition comprising:
 - a) from about 0.01% by weight to about 20% by weight of an orally-acceptable soluble potassium salt;
 - b) from about 0.01% by weight to about 10% by weight of a sodium (C_8 - C_{24}) alkylsulfate;
 - c) from about 0.01% by weight to about 20% by weight of an orally-acceptable polar surfactant, said surfactant comprising a hydrophobic portion selected from the group consisting of a (C_6 - C_{30}) alkyl group and a polymeric silicone group; and
 - d) an orally-acceptable aqueous vehicle;
wherein the molar ratio of the surfactant of (c) to the sodium (C_8 - C_{24}) alkylsulfate is greater than or equal to about 1:1.
2. An oral composition according to claim 1, wherein the surfactant of (c) is selected from the group consisting of a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acid mono or diester of ethoxylated sorbitan, a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acid diester of polyethylene glycol, a sodium salt of a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl sarcosinate, a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl ester of sarcosine acid, a sodium salt of a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl taurate, a sodium salt of a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl methyltaurate, a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl ester of taurine, a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl ester of methyltaurine acid, a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl betaine, and a (C_6 - C_{30}) fatty acyl quaternary ammonium chloride.
3. An oral composition according to claim 1, wherein the surfactant of (c) is selected from the group consisting of a dimethicone copolyol, a sodium dimethicone copolyol acetyl methyltaurate, a dimethicone copolyol myristyl ammonium chloride, and a dimethicone copolyol phosphate.
4. An oral composition according to claim 1, wherein the soluble potassium salt of the composition comprises a potassium pyrophosphate salt in an amount effective, optionally in combination with other pyrophosphate salts, to remove or loosen plaque and/or stains when the composition is orally applied to a dental surface.
5. An oral composition according to claim 4, in the form of an oral rinse.
6. An oral composition according to claim 4, in the form of a dentifrice.
7. An oral composition according to claim 1, wherein the soluble potassium salt of the composition comprises soluble potassium salt that possesses activity in reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity in an amount effective to reduce dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity when the composition is orally applied to a dental surface.
8. An oral composition according to claim 7, wherein the soluble potassium salt that possesses activity in reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity is potassium nitrate.
9. An oral composition according to claim 7, in the form of a dentifrice.
10. An oral composition according to claim 9, in the form of a gel.
11. An oral composition according to claim 7, further comprising a flavoring that does not comprise a substantial amount of menthol.

12. An oral composition according to claim 11, wherein the flavoring that does not comprise a substantial amount of menthol is a mint flavoring.
13. An oral composition according to claim 1, wherein the soluble potassium salt is selected from the group consisting of a potassium pyrophosphate salt, potassium nitrate, and mixtures thereof.
14. An oral composition for reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity comprising an effective amount of an ingredient that possesses activity in reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity, an orally-acceptable vehicle, and a flavoring that does not contain a substantial amount of menthol in an amount effective to provide flavor to the composition.
15. An oral composition according to claim 14 wherein the ingredient possessing activity in reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity is a soluble potassium salt.
16. An oral composition according to claim 15, wherein the soluble potassium salt is potassium nitrate.
17. An oral composition according to claim 14 wherein the ingredient possessing activity in reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity is selected from the group consisting of potassium nitrate; potassium citrate; potassium chloride; potassium oxalate; potassium bicarbonate; dipotassium pyrophosphate; tetrapotassium pyrophosphate; tripotassium pyrophosphate; monopotassium pyrophosphate; potassium phosphate; monobasic potassium phosphate; dibasic potassium phosphate; tribasic potassium phosphate; a soluble stannus salt; a soluble strontium salt, for example strontium chloride; and combinations thereof.
18. An oral composition according to claim 14, wherein the flavoring does not contain a mint flavoring.
19. An oral composition according to claim 18, wherein the flavoring comprises a clove, cinnamon, anise, sassafras, bubble gum, or fruit flavoring.
20. An oral composition according to claim 14, wherein the flavoring comprises a dementholated natural peppermint extract.
21. An oral composition according to claim 14, wherein the flavoring comprises a synthetic blend.
22. An oral composition according to claim 21, wherein the flavoring comprises a mint flavoring.
23. An oral composition according to claim 22, wherein the flavoring comprises a peppermint flavoring.
24. A mint flavoring that does not comprise a substantial amount of menthol, said mint flavoring being either a dementholated natural mint extract or a synthetic blend.
25. An aqueous detergent composition comprising an effective amount of a soluble potassium salt, a sodium (C_6 - C_{24}) alkylsulfate in an amount effective to remove or loosen debris and/or stains from a surface, and a polar surfactant, said polar surfactant comprising a hydrophobic portion selected from the group consisting of a (C_6 - C_{30}) alkyl group and a polymeric

silicone group, wherein the molar ratio of the surfactant to the sodium (C₈-C₂₄) alkylsulfate is greater than or equal to about 1:1.

26. A method for inhibiting the formation of a potassium alkylsulfate precipitate in an aqueous composition comprising a soluble potassium salt and a sodium (C₈-C₂₄) alkylsulfate, 5 method comprises including a polar surfactant in said composition in an amount of about equal to or greater than the amount of sodium (C₈-C₂₄) alkylsulfate in the composition, said polar surfactant including a hydrophobic portion selected from the group consisting of a (C₆-C₃₀) alkyl group and a polymeric silicone group.

27. A dentifrice for reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity comprising
10 (a) from about 1% to about 10% potassium nitrate;
(b) from about 0.1% to about 5% SLS;
(c) from about 0.1% to about 20% by weight of an orally-acceptable polar surfactant, said surfactant comprising a hydrophobic portion selected from the group consisting of a (C₆-C₃₀) alkyl group and a polymeric silicone group;

15 (d) from about 10% to about 60% by weight of an abrasive silica;
(e) an effective amount of a soluble fluoride salt; and
(f) an orally-acceptable aqueous vehicle;
wherein the molar ratio of the surfactant of (c) to SLS of (b) is greater than or equal to about 1:1.

20 28. A dentifrice according to claim 27 in the form of a gel.

29. A dentifrice according to claim 28 in the form of a liquid gel.

30. A dentifrice, in the form of a gel, for removing or loosening plaque and/or stains from dental surfaces comprising

25 (a) from about 1% to about 10% of a soluble potassium salt selected from the group consisting of dipotassium pyrophosphate, tetrapotassium pyrophosphate, tripotassium pyrophosphate, monopotassium pyrophosphate, and combinations thereof;

(b) from about 0.1% to about 5% SLS;

(c) from about 0.1% to about 20% by weight of an orally-acceptable polar surfactant, said surfactant comprising a hydrophobic portion selected from the group consisting of a (C₆-C₃₀) alkyl group and a polymeric silicone group;

(d) from about 10% to about 60% by weight of an abrasive silica;

(e) an effective amount of a soluble fluoride salt; and

(f) an orally-acceptable aqueous vehicle;

35 wherein the molar ratio of the surfactant of (c) to SLS of (b) is greater than or equal to about 1:1.

31. An oral rinse for reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity comprising

a) from about 0.1% to about 5% potassium nitrate;

(b) from about 0.02% to about 2% SLS;

- (c) from about 0.1% to about 20% by weight of an orally-acceptable polar surfactant, said surfactant comprising a hydrophobic portion selected from the group consisting of a (C₆-C₃₀) alkyl group and a polymeric silicone group; and
(d) an orally-acceptable aqueous vehicle;
- 5 wherein the molar ratio of the surfactant of (c) to SLS of (b) is greater than or equal to about 1:1.
32. An oral rinse for removing or loosening plaque and/or stains from dental surfaces comprising
- 10 a) from about 0.1% to about 5% of a potassium salt selected from the group consisting of dipotassium pyrophosphate, tetrapotassium pyrophosphate, tripotassium pyrophosphate, monopotassium pyrophosphate, and combinations thereof;
- (b) from about 0.02% to about 2% SLS;
- 15 (c) from about 0.1% to about 20% by weight of an orally-acceptable polar surfactant, said surfactant comprising a hydrophobic portion selected from the group consisting of a (C₆-C₃₀) alkyl group and a polymeric silicone group; and
(d) an orally-acceptable aqueous vehicle;
- wherein the molar ratio of the surfactant of (c) to SLS of (b) is greater than or equal to about 1:1.
33. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains while simultaneously reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 7.
- 20
34. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains while simultaneously reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 14.
- 25
35. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains while simultaneously reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 27.
- 30
36. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains while simultaneously reducing dental nerve and/or dentin sensitivity in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 31.
- 35
37. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 1.

39. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 4.
40. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 30.
41. A method of loosening and/or removing dental plaque and/or stains in an oral cavity of a mammal, comprising administering to the oral cavity of said mammal an effective amount of an oral composition according to claim 32.
- 10 42. A detergent composition according to claim 25 suitable for loosening and/or removing dirt, debris, and/or stains from skin and/or hair.
43. A method of loosening and/or removing dirt, debris, and/or stains from skin or hair, comprising administering to said skin or hair an amount of a composition according to claim 42 effective in removing or loosening dirt, debris, or stains.
- 15 44. A detergent composition according to claim 25 suitable for loosening and/or removing dirt, debris, and/or stains from a hard surface and/or a fabric.
45. A method of loosening or removing dirt, debris, and/or stains from a hard surface or a fabric, comprising administering to said hard surface or fabric an amount of a composition according to claim 44 effective in removing or loosening dirt, debris, or stains.